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of the Great Powers of Europe except Italy. Closely tied to her ally as she was, her consent to Russian policy was taken for granted in St. Petersburg, and she was not even consulted about the order for general mobilization which enlarged an Austrian punitive expedition into a world war. Russk had been very lukewarm in the Agadir crisis, and France, whose relations with Austria had always been friendly, had no desire to fight; yet she had no choice but to follow where her partner led. In addition to her treaty obligations she knew that her neutrality would ensure German dojnnation of the Continent. All she could do was to appeal to England for help. Every Frenchman longed for the recovery of the Rhine provinces, but few dreamed of unleashing a war for that purpose.

The course taken by the British Government was equally clearly marked out by the declarations and decisions of the thest ten years. " My God, Mr. Page," exclaimed King George, ** what else could we do ? " The violation of Belgian neutrality, which England, like Germany, was pledged to defend, roused the nation to righteous anger and supplied the theme of " our ultimatum, but it was the occasion rather than the cause of * declaration of war. Though our only formal allies were Portugal and Japan, and' though in theory we retained entire liberty of action, we had now thrown in our lot with France and Russk. Our diplomatic frontier was on the Rhine. Had we stood aside, the Central Powers would have won an easy victory and we should have found ourselves alone. France and Russk would have scorned us as false friends, who, after years of co-operation and expert discussions, deserted them at the crisis of their fate ; and the German menace, intensified by the collapse of the Triple Entente, would have compelled us to arm to the teeth on land and sea. Grey's

assurance to the
House of Commons on August 3, 1914, that our
hands were
free was correct in form but inaccurate in
substance, for his
whole speech breathed the conviction that we
should be not
only endangered but disgraced if we left France
in the lurch.
Opinions will continue to differ as to the wisdom of
the policy of
Continentalism and as to the particular steps
taken or omitted
by him in the critical days. What is not in doubt
is the
sincerity of his efforts to avert the catastrophe and
the practical
impossibility of neutrality when they failed. In
1914, as in the
Crimean War, as in the struggles against Louis
XIV and
Napoleon, as in 1939, we fought for the Balance
of Power, in
other words for our own survival and security.